Regular and skeltell
Meets...

Oliver Neale

F 33
N6667

FROM THE LIBRARY OF

REV. LOUIS FITZGERALD BENSON, D. D.

BEQUEATHED BY HIM TO

THE LIBRARY OF

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SCC
9448

Habijah Weld's Book

Regular and skilful Music in the Worship of GOD,

JAN 19 193

Founded in the Law of Nature, and introduced into his Worship, by his own institution, under both the Jewish and Christian Dispensations;

SHEWN IN A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE

North Meeting-House, NEWBURY-PORT,

AT THE

Desire of the Church and Congregation,

FEBRUARY 8th, 1774.

By OLIVER NOBLE, A. M.
Pastor of a Church in NEWBURY.

Printed at the Desire of the Musical Society,
In NEWBURY-PORT.

AND OF A NUMBER OF

Gentlemen and Ladies who heard it.

Then sang Moses and the Children of Israel this Song. — MOSES.
Come before his Presence with Singing. — King DAVID.
I will sing with the Spirit, and with the Understanding. — PAUL.

BOSTON:
Printed by MILLS and HICKS, for DANIEL BAYLEY, in NEWBURY-PORT, 1774.

DEDICATION.

TO the Church and Congregation that uſually worſhip in the North Meeting-Houſe, NEWBURY-PORT; and to the Muſical Society in ſaid Town; and to the Singing Men and Singing Women, wherever this ſhall come;---This Sermon is humbly dedicated, by their moſt

Obedient and
humble
Servant,
for Jeſus's
Sake,
The AUTHOR.

A

DISCOURE on MUSIC, &c.

I. CHRON. xv. 22.

And Chenaniah, *Chief of the* Levites, *was for Songs; he inſtructed about the Song, becauſe he was ſkilful.*

THAT the bleſſed God, the author of nature, the God of providence and grace, the Lord of angels and men, ſhould be worſhipped with praiſe and thankſgiving by all intelligencies, is founded in the moral and unchangeable fitneſs of things, and belongs to the religion or law of *nature*; and will remain binding upon all moral beings, as long as the relation of Creator and creature ſubſiſts.

Our account of the duty of praiſing God with the voice of melody, or *ſinging* forth the praiſes of the ALMIGHTY, is *coeval* with *creation* itſelf. For when God had finiſhed the ſtupendious work of creation, and had taken, as it were, a *retroſpect* of the grand machine, and ſaw that *all* was very good, all ſuited to his divine and infinite *plan*, and had pronounced it ſo in the preſence of the heavenly

heavenly *hoſt*; the heavenly CHOIR celebrated the workmanſhip, and worſhipped and glorified the infinite Workman, in a *ſong* of praiſe, as the moſt proper and ſublime way of *praiſing*, and worſhipping God.

For, and on that great occaſion, the angels (who are called morning ſtars, and ſons of God) *ſang together and ſhouted for joy*. That is, they expreſſed their praiſe in a vocal anthem.—And indeed, it ſeems to be a kind of natural worſhip, that forces itſelf upon the intelligent mind: The obligation to which, ſeems to be written on the heart; that has always excited all moral beings, that have had any true ſenſe of God upon their minds, to expreſs their homage to him with their voice in ſongs of praiſe. For we find the people of God in the early ages of the world, expreſſing their homage to God this way; and that before there were any poſitive inſtitutions of God about this part of worſhip. This is evident, not only from the account we have of that memorable tranſaction at the Red Sea; but at other times, and on other occaſions. Vocal Muſic is, in *itſelf*, a noble and ſublime art, and anſwers ſublime purpoſes; eſpecially when it takes a ſerious and ſacred turn, and is employed in the worſhip and praiſe of God. It has not only been *revered, honored, learned, and practiſed*, by the greateſt, wiſeſt, and *beſt* of men in all ages, as that which ennobles the

ſoul

ſoul of man, raiſes its ideas, and ſweetly calms the rougher paſſions, and ſurpriſingly prepares the mind for the ſublimeſt, and moſt vigorous exertions and meditations; but this excellent art, has been introduced into the worſhip of God by his *own* ſpecial inſtitution, under both diſpenſations: Which adds dignity to it, and gives weight to the *ſubject*; and which ſhould animate all that are capable of it, to a ſacred ambition to learn, in ſome good meaſure, this important art, and to get ſkill in muſic, eſpecially in pſalmody; and to uſe it well, in the praiſe of their God, and to the honor of their Redeemer, and to their own, and others edification.

The bleſſed God was long worſhipped by ſacrifices, before he was pleaſed to ſettle their number, kind, quality, and the manner of ſacrificing as we find them in the Jewiſh law, inſtituted of God, by Moſes, his ſervant. So it was with this part of worſhip of which we are treating:—Though it is founded in the moral *reaſon*, and unchangeable *fitneſs* of things, and the obligations to vocal praiſe inforced by the law of nature; yet God was pleaſed to give particular orders about it, and to regulate its form and *manner* by ſpecial command and inſtitution. This he did in particular in the time of David that great and excellent King of *Iſrael*; under that great *Maſter* of divine *muſic*, the man after God's own heart.

The

The bleſſed God was pleaſed, as it were, to ſettle the muſical part of his worſhip, under the countenance and inſpection, of his favorite King; *who* himſelf was the moſt *ſweet pſalmiſt* and ſinger of *Iſrael*. He therefore gave particular orders and directions about this ſublime part of the worſhip of the Lord in his *ſanctuary*; that the ſacred ſong might be managed decently, and in order, to the honor of God, and to the edification of the pious and devout worſhipper. And to this end, a very conſiderable number, both of ſinging men, and ſinging women, were appointed, to lead in*, if not wholly to perform this part of divine worſhip. And they were to devote their time, and talents, to the employment, or to qualify themſelves for it. They were to make divine muſic, and the art and knowledge of it, their principal buſineſs.† This was, that they might be *ſkilful in muſic*, and know how to manage the ſacred *ſong* in the beſt manner, that the praiſes of the Lord might be ſung in all its parts, in various chords and proportions of muſical ſound; that it might be calculated, to ennoble the *ſoul*, to warm the *heart*, and to wrap every power in ſacred

* I am not certain but that the congregation of the Lord joined with the ſingers in the public worſhip of praiſe, under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, eſpecially thoſe whoſe voices were tolerably formed to muſic; though a late ingenious writer is of a different opinion.

† This appears from their having a public maintenance allowed them, as the Prieſts had. *Neh.* xi. 23.

ſacred devotion. Though the inſtructions about the divine muſic, that we find recorded in this chapter, relate more eſpecially to a particular occaſion, viz. that of bringing back the *Ark* of God, and ſetting of it in the place that King *David* had prepared for it; yet we find the ſame care about the order and regularity of muſic, continued in the ſtated worſhip of God, all along under the Jewiſh œconomy. That it was not of human invention, or meerly by the command of *David*, the King; but by the command of God, and having the ſtamp of divine appointment, ſhall be conſidered in the ſequel. What has been already ſaid opens the way for a more particular conſideration of the text. "And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for ſongs." Can it be a queſtion, what *ſongs* theſe were, that he was to be maſter of, and to manage with *beauty* and *order?* Surely no, the point is obvious; they were the ſongs and pſalms of the *Lord*, compoſed by holy men of old, under the *guidance* of the Holy-Ghoſt; deſigned and adapted to worſhip and glorify the God of Iſrael. And to this end, they had not only the ſongs of Moſes, and others that were inſpired by the ſacred ſpirit, *ſet to muſic*; but David *himſelf*, the ſweet ſinger of Iſrael, was moved by the Holy-Ghoſt to compoſe many divine pſalms and ſacred hymns, which he either *ſet* to muſic himſelf

himſelf, or commited them to ſeveral ſkilful maſters of muſic for this purpoſe; that they might be ſung with ſkill, and made uſe of in the public worſhip of God.

Such a maſter of muſic was Chenaniah, mentioned in the text, and it is worth our notice in this place that he was *chief* of the Levites: That he ſuſtained one of the firſt characters for honor and dignity in the kingdom of Iſrael; yet, notwithſtanding, ſo noble, ſo excellent was the art of muſic, eſteemed in that day, eſpecially divine *muſic*, to be employed in the worſhip, and to the honor of the true and living God; that the greateſt perſonages of the age did not think it below their dignity to apply themſelves to, and ſpend much of their time in the ſtudy and practice of it.

King David *himſelf*, though one of the greateſt monarchs of the age in which he lived, though he was poſſeſſed with a capacious mind, and was remarkable for his wiſdom, for his prudence, as well as for his valor, power and authority; was no leſs remarkable for his piety and cloſe attachment to the worſhip of God and a moſt fervent promoter of it in every part, and is *memorable* for his *ſkill* and *zeal* in this excellent part; that it might be performed by rule, with ſkill, with decency and order, ſo as to anſwer in the beſt manner the good ends of its appointment.

And

And with this view was Chenaniah appointed maſter of the ſacred ſongs of the Lord; in the original it is, he was a lifter up of the ſongs, it is, as if it was ſaid, that he was the moderator of the ſacred muſic, *i. e.* he not only directed about the tunes and parts thereof, compoſing ſome and chooſing others, adapted to the meaſure, nature and ſolemnity of the pſalm, and ſong to be made uſe of in the worſhip of God, on this, or that occaſion, ſo that the melody might be ſweet and engaging, ſuited to raiſe the ſoul to the higheſt pitch of devotion; but he took pains with, and inſtructed the ſingers, how to lift up their voices *together* in harmony, on the various parts that he aſſigned them, ſo that the various notes ſhould *chord*, and afford the ſweeteſt muſic to the ear; that by this means the divine inſtruction of the *ſong*, or the matter of the *pſalm*, might find the readieſt acceſs to the *heart*, and better the *ſoul* by raiſing it to God, and directing all the deſires and affections, to things divine and heavenly.

Thus much at leaſt, is ſuggeſted to us, by his being the lifter up of the ſacred ſongs of the Lord, and inſtructing about them, *becauſe he* was ſkilful. For this is the reaſon given, why he was aſſigned to this honorable employ; why, he was appointed moderator of this part of God's worſhip, and to fit and qualify others for this excellent buſineſs, by

inſtructing them in this ſublime art. It was *becauſe* he was ſkilful ; *q. d.* he was well qualified to regulate the time and movement of the ſacred ſong, becauſe he entered into the ſpirit and deſign of this method of praiſing and worſhipping the God of Iſrael ; not only ſo, but he well underſtood the ſcale of *muſic*, and was ready at the uſe of it, and *apt* to teach others the regular and harmonious performance of the duty, that it might be acceptable to God, and well anſwer the ends of its inſtitution, with regard to men, their *comfort* and *edification*.

This ſhort paſſage of inſpiration affords us the following ſentiments, which I think are either expreſſed, or fairly implied, viz.

That praiſing God with the *voice* as well as with the heart, or ſinging forth his praiſes with the voice of *melody*, and that with ſkill, gracefulneſs and harmony ; is a duty of great importance, and incumbent upon all that are capable of it : Founded in the moral fitneſs of things, enforced by the ſpecial inſtitution of God, and binding upon the chriſtian, as well as the Jewiſh church and people of God. That the duty is founded in the reaſon and unchangeable fitneſs of *things*, and taught us by the law of nature, may appear not only, from the relation there is between God and the creature, but from the *ſentiments* and *practice* of men, on great and weighty

weighty occaſions, while under the guidance and direction of reaſon, and natural conſcience only. Natural reaſon without, and before there was any poſitive inſtitution of God, about the matter, has proved *ſufficient* to teach men that they could no way ſo properly expreſs the earneſt deſires and warm emotions of their ſouls, in pious gratitude and joy, as in the ſymphony of ſong, and animating chords of muſic.

This is not only evident from many teſtimonies that might be brought from profane hiſtory, but from the ſketches we often find in the ſacred records; where we find that pious men of old, without any ſpecial direction of God about it, and *meerly* from the dictates of their own minds; on great and animating occaſions, break forth into ſinging, and expreſſed their religious thankfulneſs, in ſongs of praiſe to the Rock of their ſalvation. This was undeniably the caſe with Moſes and the children of Iſrael at the Red Sea; *then ſang Moſes and the children of Iſrael this* ſong. And it does not appear, that as yet there was any divine inſtitution about this part of the worſhip, but otherwiſe, that it was the natural overflowings of their pious joy and *thankfulneſs* on that great *occaſion*, and the dictates of reaſon and natural conſcience, that expreſſed *itſelf* in muſic, and directed them thus to ſing God's praiſe.

I might mention a like inſtance at the *well* of *Beer*, where the people of God, being delivered from diſtreſſing thirſt, brake forth into ſongs of praiſe; worſhipping the God of their ſalvation with vocal muſic; and moſt likely the ſongs of Deborah, and Barak were of the ſame kind. But I ſhall not enlarge upon this thought.—I am next to obſerve, that this excellent and ſublime art of muſic, was introduced into the ancient church of God, by his own ſpecial *appointment*, and made a neceſſary and important part of his worſhip.

The great Creator of all things, having wonderfully conſtituted man, with regard to the organs of ſpeech and ſound, as well as on other accounts, forming his voice in ſuch a manner that it is eaſily *tuned* to various notes of concord and harmony; and having impreſſed his very nature with a conſciouſneſs of uſing it in the praiſe of his Creator, was pleaſed, in his own time and way, to give ſpecial direction about it. And after he had erected a church in the world, and from time to time, had *revealed* his mind and will concerning his worſhip, and ſhewn how he would be worſhipped, as well with regard to the *manner* as *matter* of WORSHIP, was alſo pleaſed to give ſpecial command and direction about this part of worſhip, directing that it ſhould be performed in the beſt manner, moſt agreeable to the nature of the duty, and to the nature

nature of man; *i. e.* with ſkill and harmony of the voice: That it might tend to rouſe a ſpirit of devotion in the mind of man, and to elevate his ſoul in the praiſes of his Creator and Redeemer: And to this purpoſe there were a great number appointed to the ſacred ſervice, and were inſtructed in the art and ſkill of muſic under the beſt maſters of the age; that in the worſhip of God, it might be performed without diſcord or confuſion, but with decency and order; for our God is a God of order, not of confuſion.

Now the obvious reaſon, why ſo much ſkill was to be exerciſed in, and pains taken about this part of worſhip was, to prevent confuſion and diſorder, in a part of worſhip where ſo many were to lift up their voices together; in a part, deſigned and calculated to *reach* inſtruction to the ſoul, by the *harmony* of SOUND, and to warm the heart, in the exerciſe of true devotion; which would be impoſſible were it to be performed without rule, ſkill or order.—Now to evidence that all this care and pains about the *muſical* part of God's worſhip, which we find recorded in the text and context, did not originate from the mere humour of King David;—but was by the appointment of the Lord, we need but turn you to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. For upon the return of the captivity, in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, when the true worſhip

ſhip of God was again ſet up in Jeruſalem, and the enquiry was *ſtrictly* made, what is that model the Lord commanded us, by Moſes and the Prophets :—The SINGERS in the worſhip of God were appointed in their order, according as we find it recorded in the text and context ; and this is expreſsly ſaid to be as the Lord had commanded, by the mouth of his ſervants, the Prophets ; and again it is ſaid that Jehoiada, the prieſt, appointed the *ſingers* in the worſhip of God ; as *it was written in the law of Moſes, and commanded by David, the King* : All which refer to what is written in our text, and context, and to the regulation of the ſacred muſic, under the man after God's own heart : Which is ſufficient to illuſtrate the point, that *vocal muſic* was introduced into the worſhip of God, by his OWN *inſtitution* ; and that the Jewiſh *church* were under not only moral, but *poſitive* obligations, to perform it with all poſſible regularity and harmony, as well as with pious frames of heart and religious exerciſe of ſoul.

But if the queſtion ſhould ariſe, is this binding upon *chriſtians ?* Or ſhould any enquire, is it yet obligatory upon the church of God under the chriſtian diſpenſation, to worſhip God with the voice of melody, in *ſinging* forth his praiſe ? To which I anſwer, that the affirmative is fully evident, and may be clearly illuſtrated, both from the reaſons of the

the inſtitution, that ſtill remain, and from the *poſitive* teſtimony of God in this matter, found both in the old and new-teſtaments.

Now, it is evident, that the reaſons of the duty ſtill remain, and always will, as to ſubſtance; though it may vary as to ſome circumſtances.—The reaſons of the duty, as to ſubſtance, are of a moral nature; originate from the relation between the Creator and creature, and will always continue, ſo long as that relation ſubſiſts. They depend upon the unalterable *fitneſs* of things, and therefore the reaſons of the duty are unchangeable. Therefore it follows, that as the reaſons and nature of the duty, were not peculiar to the ſtate and circumſtances of the Jewiſh church, but of equal obligation under every diſpenſation; ſo muſt of conſequence, have equal weight with, and be equally binding upon chriſtians. Now, one obvious reaſon why *ſinging* with the voice of melody, was introduced into the Jewiſh church, and by divine *appointment* made part of their religious worſhip was, becauſe that this ſacred *muſic* had a *ſtriking* tendency, and peculiar force and *energy*, to elevate the ſoul of man, and to engage the mind in the moſt fervent exerciſes of religion; and, as it were, to abſorb it in the warmeſt raptures of devotion.

For nothing perhaps (in a way of means) can have a greater tendency, to *aſſimulate* the humble

humble ſoul to God, and more and more liken him to his bleſſed image, and raiſe every power to the higheſt pitch of gratitude, praiſe and thankſgiving: And ſacred *muſic* has evidently the ſame bleſſed tendency now, it had of old, and for the ſame reaſons; for human nature is much the ſame now, as it was then; God is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, and as worthy to be worſhipped and praiſed as ever he was, and pious obligation to do it is the ſame, and ſtill remains; ſo that, that which was the obvious reaſon for its being then inſtituted, is as concluſive for its being now inſtituted, and to continue binding upon the chriſtian church.

And if regular, ſkilful, and harmonious managment of the ſacred ſong, in all its parts and movements, had a tendency then to enkindle devotion, to warm the heart, and to animate the ſoul, as it were to the raptures of joy and gratitude;—it has now, and for the ſame reaſons; and it is as binding upon the *chriſtian*, as it was upon the Jewiſh church and people of God.

It is readily granted, that there were many things in the inſtituted worſhip of God's ancient church and people, that were peculiar to them, and to that ſtate and period of the church, and have no place under the chriſtian diſpenſation: And that becauſe the reaſons of this appointment do not now obtain

tain, they being aboliſhed by the coming and kingdom of Chriſt.

Such were all things *purely ceremonial and typical*, which are now entirely done away by the coming of Chriſt the antitype, and the introduction of the goſpel ſtate. And indeed, it appears to me to be a very juſt and ſafe way of determining what things were ceremonial and what were not, what were peculiar to the then ſtate of the church, and what were not; by taking into our view the particular *reaſons* of the inſtitution.

For thoſe practices and ordinances that had place then, *not* for REASONS that were peculiar to the Jews and that diſpenſation, but for reaſons that are of equal weight under every diſpenſation, are no doubt *binding* under every diſpenſation, and ought to be conformed to, by every ſerious worſhipper of God. This *reaſoning* is applicable to the duty we are now conſidering. Whatever circumſtances may differ, yet the *ſubſtance* or *eſſence* of the duty, remains ſtill the ſame, and as binding upon us, as them; and that with regard to the *general* manner, as well as matter of the duty, *i. e.* with *graceſulneſs and harmony*, as well as with grace in our hearts.—But further, the ſame ſentiment is *plainly* taught us in the word of God. There are ſeveral intimations to this amount in the old-teſtament, that ſuggeſts to us that

this duty of worſhipping and praiſing God with the voice of melody, was to be continued under the goſpel diſpenſation; one or two of which I ſhall mention, that to me appear to imply a command, and to make the duty binding upon the church of God under the goſpel diſpenſation;—particularly in the 100th pſalm, *make a joyful noiſe unto the Lord, all ye* LANDS; *i. e.* ye people of all lands,—*ſerve the Lord with gladneſs*;—*come before his preſence with ſinging*. This we find is an addreſs to all PEOPLE, of *all* LANDS, and at *all* TIMES. It is *allowed* by all *commentators*, and by the Jewiſh *Doctors* and *Rabbies themſelves*, That this pſalm has a peculiar *reference* to the goſpel day, and ſtate of the church, and therefore, is a command to chriſtian worſhippers *to come before*, or into the *preſence of the* LORD, *with ſinging*, and to pour out the gratitude and joy of their hearts in *harmony of ſound, in the charming accents of ſkilful and well regulated muſic*. But it is time that I hint to you a few things, that will afford us further light in this matter, which we collect from the new-teſtament.

I ſhall but mention the ſongs of the bleſſed virgin, of Zachariah and Elizabeth, and of good old Simeon, and others, that vented the pious raptures of their ſouls, in *vocal* ſongs of praiſe; but ſhall more particularly conſider the *examples* and teſtimonies, that Chriſt

Chriſt and his apoſtles have left us upon ſacred record. When the Lord Jeſus, by his example and command, had inſtituted the ſacrament of the holy ſupper, at the ſame time, did ſignify, and ſuggeſt to us, that it was his will that we ſhould ſing his praiſes, as a part of religious worſhip under the goſpel diſpenſation : For he concluded the important, the inſtructive celebration with a ſacred hymn.—Should it be objected, that this is the only time we have any account of our Saviour's ſinging as a part of divine worſhip, and ſo it cannot be argued from thence, that he would have his church *ſing* as a part of religious worſhip : In reply we may obſerve, that we have no account of his celebration of the holy ſupper at any other time ; what then ? He no doubt left the whole for our imitation, and hereby fully ſuggeſts to us, that it is his will that we ſhould worſhip him by ſinging forth his praiſe.

Neither have we any account of his praying before, or after his ſermons, What then ? Why no doubt he was a conſtant attender on the Jewiſh temple worſhip ; of which ſinging was a conſtant and important part, *equally* known, and equally binding as the duty of prayer, or any other part of divine worſhip.

But it will be to our purpoſe to *comment* a little, upon what we find in the writings of St. Paul, relating to this duty of *ſinging* the praiſes

praiſes of God in our worſhip ; eſpecially ſee to this purpoſe the 14th chapter of his firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians.—And it is obſerveable here, that the profeſſed deſign of this chapter is to regulate the worſhip of God, ſo that it might be performed decently, and with order, he aims to reform ſeveral irregularities in the worſhip of God, that had ſo ſoon crept into the church, that the *chriſtian* worſhip might be guarded againſt confuſion and diſorder ; and managed with that decency and order that would have a tendency to promote the declarative glory of God, the honor of the Redeemer, and the *mutual* edification of *chriſtian* worſhippers. And it is in this connection that he ſays, *I will pray with the ſpirit, and I will pray with the underſtanding ; I will ſing with the ſpirit, and I will ſing with the underſtanding* : And he does not ſay this only with reference to himſelf, as what he reſolved upon with regard to his own conduct, but this is what he enjoined upon the whole church of God in his name, ſpeaking with the authority of an inſpired apoſtle.

And it is much to our purpoſe, and worth *particular* notice, that we find this great apoſtle ſpeaking of *ſinging* as a well known part of religious worſhip, in common and ſtated uſe and practice, equally known and acknowledged with either praying or preaching,

ing, and a duty equally binding upon the chriſtian church.

And here he lets us know that it ſhould be performed not only in the ſpirit, but with the voice, not only with a right temper of mind, and with true devotion of heart, but with *underſtanding* : Not only with underſtanding as to the matter and meaning of the ſacred *ſong*, but as to the *rule* and manner of its performance, *i. e.* with ſkill and harmony. This gloſs upon the words is eaſily juſtified, from the ſimilitude the apoſtle brings to illuſtrate his argument, which is taken from the deſign and uſe of a trumpet in war ; for if the trumpet gives an uncertain ſound, who ſhall prepare himſelf for the battle ; *i. e.* if the trumpet give an irregular, confuſed, or uncertain ſound, it throws the ſoldiers into confuſion, and diſſerves the cauſe which it was deſigned to promote.

So it is with the viſible worſhip of God in all the parts of it, if the whole aſſembly be ſpeaking or praying at one time, or all together, or in an unknown tongue, it introduces confuſion ; though we hear the ſound the underſtanding is not inſtructed, and the heart cannot be bettered ; the affections are not excited, devotion and piety are not promoted. The ſame is obſerveable with regard to ſinging the praiſes of God ; (the deſign of which part of worſhip is, that our voices may

may be lifted up together) there muſt be ſome known and determinate method, or mode of ſound, well underſtood, in which we can unite, or it cannot anſwer the purpoſe of edification: Therefore the praiſes of the Lord are to be ſang forth, not in *uncertain* ſounds, not in confuſion and diſorder, with the harſh and jarring notes of diſcord; but with harmony and concord, underſtanding the manner, as well as the matter of the ſacred ſong.

For if, in ſinging the ſongs of the Lord, we do it in irregular and uncertain ſounds, where is the harmony? How ſhall we ſing together? How ſhall we keep time and movement together in this part of worſhip? How ſhall we underſtand one another? And how is it poſſible that we ſhould be excited hereby to devotion, and be mutually edified.

So it appears that by *underſtanding*, the apoſtle means *ſkill* in the *manner*, as well as underſtanding in the *matter*, to be ſung in the worſhip of God; and anſwers to inſtruction and ſkill, mentioned in the text.

To the ſame purpoſe is that of the ſame apoſtle to the Coloſſians, iii. 16. where the duty now under conſideration is expreſsly enjoined upon all chriſtians in common, under the goſpel diſpenſation, viz. that they teach and admoniſh one another, in pſalms, hymns and ſpiritual ſongs, *ſinging with grace in*

in their hearts unto the Lord. Though in this paſſage of ſcripture, a gracious temper of mind is enjoined, the neceſſity and importance of grace in the heart inforced, in order to the right performance of this duty; which indeed is the leading ſentiment in the right performance of every duty. Yet he cannot mean to exclude the harmony of the voice, for the end aimed at depends upon its being vocal; which is teaching and admoniſhing *one another:* The external part of the duty is taken for granted as a well known part of worſhip; but here the apoſtle reminds us of the better and internal part of it, viz. Grace in the heart that ſhould always accompany the external performance of the duty, as the beſt method, in order to anſwer the great and important end of the duty; teaching and admoniſhing one another, that is, by ſtirring up gracious affections in ourſelves and others, by the elevating accents of *muſic* in ſongs of *praiſe*, and by the united harmony of voice. Now it is evident this end cannot be anſwered without ſinging together in a ſocial manner, and ſkilfully uniting our voices in the ſolemn, in the inſtructive ſong:

Thus have I ſhewn that the duty of praiſing God with the voice of melody, or ſinging forth his praiſe in ſkilful and well regulated *muſic*, is binding upon the chriſtian church and

and people of God, as much as it was upon the Jewiſh, and is taught us in the ſcriptures both of the old and new teſtaments. But perhaps it will be expected that on this occaſion ſomething ſhould be ſaid, more particularly concerning the manner, decency and order of this part of divine worſhip.

We have ſhewn already in this diſcourſe that *ſinging* the praiſes of God as an act of worſhip, is a duty taught us, both by reaſon and ſcripture ; but how frequent it is to be practiſed or how often we ſhould *ſing* praiſe when we come together for worſhip, is no where pointed out in the word of God. But it is to be a part of our public worſhip, and if ſo, why not a part of our family worſhip for the ſame reaſons, it has the ſame bleſſed tendency to warm the heart, and to excite ſpiritual devotion in the family as well as in the houſe of God. Since therefore the duty itſelf is clearly taught us in the word of God, and the frequency and ſome other circumſtances are not, chriſtian prudence muſt direct ; but reaſon and conſtant experience of the benefits of it, urge us to frequency in this ſoul-cheering and heart-animating duty.

But further, I ſhall obſerve, that in the compoſition of this diſcourſe, I have attended to ſome ſcripture intimations that have convinced my mind more than ever of the propriety of beginning our public worſhip with

with a ſong of praiſe. That before mentioned paſſage in the 100th pſalm ſuggeſts as much, *come before* his preſence with *ſinging* ; which words in their plain and obvious meaning, naturally lead us to conclude that *ſinging* ſhould be our firſt employ when we come into the preſence of the Lord ; that we ſhould begin his worſhip with this ſublime and holy exerciſe ; but let us take the fourth verſe in connection with the firſt, and the latter will ſerve as a comment upon the former, *enter into his gates with thankſgiving, and into his courts with praiſe* ; which I think fully intimates to us, that when we come into the courts of the Lord, we ſhould begin his worſhip with a ſong of praiſe : The reaſon and nature of the thing ſpeaks the ſame language, and points out the propriety of beginning the worſhip of God with ſinging, when we can with any conveniency and decency of voices ; for this duty devoutly performed, has a powerful tendency to compoſe and ſolemnize the mind, and to raiſe the affections, and thereby to fit and qualify the ſoul, for all ſubſequent parts of worſhip.

The thought I leave for the ſerious conſideration of all God's people.

But further, as *ſinging* is a part of God's appointed worſhip, no doubt it aught to be performed, with the moſt *decent* and *reverend* poſture of the body : For we are to offer unto

God, in his worſhip, the *body*, *as well as ſoul and ſpirit*, *which are his*. This duty is an immediate addreſs to God, and that equally with prayer; and why ſhould we not ſtand up to worſhip God, in this duty, as well as in that;—unleſs want of health, or bodily ſtrength prevent, which will equally warrant us to ſit in the duty of prayer, and no more in one duty than in the other: Will any object the fatigue and wearineſs to the body; ſuch may do well to conſider, that this was the cry of old: What a wearineſs! What a wearineſs!—And it is obſerveable that their character was none of the beſt; beſides the natural advantage of a ſtanding poſture in this part of worſhip, as it gives play to the lungs and advantage to the voice, there is a moral reaſon for it ariſing from our obligation to offer unto God our very ſelves (as the apoſtle expreſſes it) both in ſoul, body and ſpirit, which is but our reaſonable ſervice.

And now I will appeal to the common *ſenſe* of mankind, whether ſtanding in an immediate addreſs to God is not moſt becoming the duty.

We often read of their ſtanding up to ſing, and they ſtood up to praiſe the Lord in the beauty of holineſs, &c. But no where as I remember of their ſitting down to ſing forth the praiſe of the Lord.

But further, it is a fair deduction from what has been ſaid of the uſe and end of ſacred muſic

muſic ; that it ſhould be performed with ſkill, and harmonious modulation of the voice. The ſentiment is fully taught us in the text and context, and in other parts of the holy ſcriptures. This part of divine worſhip of old was performed with ſkill and harmony of the voice, and there was great care and pains taken that it might be ſo ; and to this end was Chenaniah appointed moderator of the ſacred ſongs of the Lord : He was *ſkilful* himſelf, and inſtructed others to be ſo, that this part of worſhip might be performed with gracefulneſs and harmony. Now ſkill in any thing implies a rule, according to which that ſkill is to be exerciſed ; and inſtruction ſuppoſeth, the being taught this rule ; and the uſing and applying of it ſkilfully to the purpoſe deſigned.—So ſinging in concord and harmony, or ſkill in *muſic*, neceſſarily implies a *rule*, and that they perform it ſkilfully, are acquainted, in ſome good meaſure, with this rule ; and apply it to the purpoſe deſigned, with gracefulneſs of voice, and harmony of ſound.

Muſic has its foundation in the nature of things ; it takes its riſe from the unalterable proportion of SOUNDS one to the other ; all the variations of notes and changes of the voice or inſtrument in *muſic*, are ſtill dependant upon the foundation, *i. e. the invariable proportion of* SOUNDS. It depends upon as

as exact proportions, as any part of mathematical *science* whatever, of which it is an important part. And therefore is pleasing and edifying so far, and no farther, than it is composed by, and performed according to that rule, and exact proportion; the farther from it, the more distant is the sound from *music*; but the nearer to this proportion, and the more *exactness* in performing, the more excellent and *charming* the music; and of consequence the greater power and influence upon the human mind; and the greater tendency to excite pious affection, and true devotion in the worship of God.

It hath pleased the great Author of nature, not only so to form and construct the human voice, as that it may be, in general, easily formed to the *rule* and *scale* of music, whereby we are rendered capable of making melody to God, with our voices; but hath formed in us, the curious organ of the ear, a faculty whereby we are capable of distinguishing the sweet chords and accents of well proportioned *music*, from the jarring notes of dissonance; and to be highly delighted with the one, and not less displeased and disgusted with the other: For the ear tryeth sounds, as well as words; therefore, that the sacred music used in God's holy worship, may be both pleasing and edifying (for one it cannot be without the other) it must be performed with regular

exactness

exactneſs of ſound, time and movement*. As far diſtant, as it is from this, ſo much it looſeth of its power and influence to pleaſe and

* In order further to illuſtrate this thought, and to throw light upon the ſubject, I ſhall favour the public with ſome critical remarks of my worthy friend and brother, Mr. Strong, of Simſbury, the only author I had read upon the ſubject, and to whom I am indebted for ſeveral ſentiments in this diſcourſe, though I truſt I have ſo far digeſted them, and wrought them into my own method of thinking and ſpeaking, that they have ſo far become my own as that neither he nor others, can accuſe me as a plagiary. I ſhall therefore extract ſomething from his piece by way of marginal note, as it is wrote with great juſtneſs and ingenuity, and better expreſſes the thought that I am now conſidering, than any language of my own; but let us hear what Mr. Strong ſays upon the point; he, ſpeaking of the ground and foundation of muſic, as founded in the *nature* of things, takes this inference, "Is it true that muſic has its foundation in the nature of things, and depends upon exact proportion; and as to its eſſentials always remains invariably the ſame; then certainly the principal and fundamental rules by which it is taught are alſo the ſame in all ages. Whenever therefore a regular attempt is made to reform pſalmody, it is not to introduce properly a new way of ſinging, but to recover men from their errors, and to bring them back to practice upon the only good old way: And whoever diſapproves of, or oppoſes ſuch an attempt through diſlike, does ſo through ignorance or ſomething worſe. Yet this, notwithſtanding, when people have been long without a regular method of ſinging in the worſhip of God, and have departed from it, it is not at all to be wondered at, if many warmly oppoſe an attempt for a reformation, through an averſion to innovations in matters of divine worſhip, and the more preciſe and conſcientious perſons are, the warmer their oppoſition; and yet all through ignorance or miſtake: Such has always been the caſe with reſpect to reformations of all kinds, in things pertaining to religion or the worſhip of God.---Again,---Though the rule be one and the ſame, yet it may be differently applied, and as to non-eſſentials, very perceptable alterations and variations may take place, perhaps in all caſes; for inſtance in ſinging, the notes uſed in muſic may be founded ſlower or quicker, longer or ſhorter, being juſtly proportioned, and the rule eſſentially

and delight the ſoul, and to excite it to, and animate it in the exerciſe of true devotion. Therefore from hence follows the importance of acquiring ſkill in ſacred muſic, that our voices may be lifted up together in all the parts of the ſacred ſong; and that with as great exactneſs, and with as much harmony as poſſible. There are many paſſages in ſacred ſcripture, that repreſent God's approbation of the ſkilful and melodious performance of this

the ſame. In former times, the longeſt note was to be founded four times ſo long as the longeſt now in uſe: So that although it be eſſential to good *muſic* that the ſeveral notes have their proper ſounds, yet as to the length or continuance of their ſounds, it is not of the eſſence of muſic, but of its circumſtantials, and may therefore be varied. Alſo with reſpect to keeping time with utmoſt exactneſs, in all the ſeveral *parts* of the *tune*; this is ſo eſſential to good ſinging, that it cannot poſſibly be good without it; of the truth of this every one is witneſs, who has any taſte for muſic: He quick perceives the diſagreement, and finds his ear wounded whenever it is wanting; though others who have not that taſte, diſcern nothing of it, and therefore are by no means competent judges in the caſe. But the methods uſed to meaſure and keep the time exactly have been different, in different times and places; and it is but a circumſtantial thing, what method or motion be uſed, provided it be decent and well anſwer the end. The preſent method of beating the time, as it is called, has been found the moſt eaſy and exact of any hitherto tried among us. The excellency and beauty of muſic, and I add its tendency to anſwer the purpoſes of religion, much depend upon giving the ſounds properly, and keeping the time with critical exactneſs. All the cavals and objections that can be thrown in the way, againſt regular ſinging, will go but very little way towards convincing any one who has a taſte for muſic, and finds himſelf tranſported almoſt to rapture, by its ſweet harmonious ſtrains, that regular, well proportioned muſic has nothing in it preferable, to the ſinging we have been wont to have, while we went without rule."

this duty of singing forth his praise; I shall mention but one or two. When King Solomon conveyed the ark of the covenant of the Lord to the temple he had built for it, and sat it in the designed place for its rest, he did it with a band of music, the most grand and sublime that we have any account of; and it is worth our notice, that when the singers, sang all as one, and when all the instrumental music coincided with the vocal, so as to become all as *one*, *i. e.* in perfect concord and harmony; that then, and not till then, the glory of the Lord filled the house; and the cloud of glory which was the cymbal and token of the divine presence and favour, so covered the ark, and the mercy-seat, that the priests could not stand to minister, because of the glory and perhaps because of the exstatick rapture of their souls in holy devotion, 2d Chron. v. 13. which see, &c. and God has often appeared for his people and given them signal deliverances, in consequence of the devout singing of his praise. "When the singers that were appointed to go before the army of Israel, in the time of Jehoshaphat, when the Moabites invaded them; sang and praised the Lord, saying, praise the Lord for his mercy endureth for ever, then the Lord appeared for them, and wrought a great salvation." I might mention the instance of Paul and Silas, and other instances

of

of God's gracious interpoſition upon his peoples, worſhipping of him with ſongs of praiſe; but time would fail: All which intimates to us thus much at leaſt, that the bleſſed God, has always been, and is now, ready to give gracious tokens of his approbation and favour, to the exactneſs and harmony of this part of his worſhip, when accompanied with gracious exerciſes of ſpiritual devotion. And that in this way he is ready to grant us the mercies we need, common or ſpecial; not that this ſkilful and harmonious ſinging the praiſes of the Lord, procures his favour, or moves the heart of God towards us; no verily, he is infinitely and unchangeably diſpoſed to mercy and kindneſs. But this exerciſe greatly prepares and qualifies the ſoul for the receipt of mercy; all which conſiderations ſhould be improved as a powerful motive to excite us to qualify ourſelves for, and to take great care and pains in the performance of this part of God's worſhip, as well as in all others; for God is a God of order, and will be worſhipped decently and with order, as well as in ſpirit and in truth.

But to conclude the thought, which indeed has been carried through, and interwoven with the whole diſcourſe, we may obſerve, that this ſublime part of worſhip, of which we are ſpeaking, ought not only to be performed with ſkill, and with engaging melody

of

of the voice, but with grace in the heart, it ought in all *reaſon*, to be a gracious melody; it muſt be accompanied with ſpiritual, warm and elevated devotion of the ſoul. This indeed is the primary end of the inſtitution: Though the outward regularity and beauty of pſalmody is that by which God may be viſibly gloriſied in the church; yet the outward eloquence of muſic in religious worſhip is chiefly deſireable, as it has a powerful tendency to ſtir up gracious affections, and to promote the religion of the heart. Therefore we ſhould always have the moſt ſolicitous concern, that we not only ſing gracefully and muſically with the voice, but with grace in our hearts, making melody in our hearts to the Lord; that we may glorify God in our ſouls, bodies, and ſpirits, which are his:—However uſeful and neceſſary the former is, yet it is ſo chiefly as a mean and tendency to the latter; for without this we ſhall fail of acceptance with God, and loſe the ſpecial benefit to our own ſouls; and in the iſſue be found, but as ſounding braſs, and a tinkling cymbal; and all our muſic be turned into mourning, ſad lamentation, miſery and woe: But what remains is by way of

A P P L I C A T I O N.

I. From what we have heard upon the ſubject, we infer the manifeſt reaſon we have thankfully to acknowledge, and piouſly to admire, both the wiſdom and kindneſs of our

great Creator, in forming us capable of ſo excellent an art, ſo divine an employ as that of muſic, eſpecially ſacred muſic, to be uſed in his own worſhip. Our God it is that hath adjuſted the invariable proportion of ſounds, and given theſe chords of muſic power to ſtrike our minds with the ſweeteſt ſurpriſe, and moſt agreeable rapture; he hath formed the ear, and given us the ſenſe of hearing, whereby we quick perceive its force and energy—are greatly delighted with it, and find it reach inſtruction to the *heart*; and that it carrieth our ſouls to God, on the wings of faith, love, and holy deſire.—Surely then theſe noble faculties, ſhould not ruſt with the talent hid in the earth, by the ſlothful ſervant, nor be improved to the diſhonour of him who gave them; but in return for the favour, they ſhould be improved to his honour and glory, in *ſinging* forth his praiſe in holy *melody*, and ſpiritual SONG.

II. We infer from the ſubject, that vocal praiſe ſhould alſo make part of our family worſhip; and every family ought to be capable of performing it with graceſulneſs and harmony of voice, that is capable of performing any ſocial worſhip at all; it is true indeed, that the deaf, the dumb, and the idiot are excuſed for want of capacity; and perhaps a few whoſe voices are ſo weakened with infirmity or age, that they cannot join in the ſocial praiſes of their God, which I am

ſure

ſure will be a great grief and burden to the ſerious and pious mind. And it is to be confeſſed, that there is now and then one to be found, who are in full ſtrength, and of good capacity for other employments, whoſe voices are ſo ſtubborn and *unwieldy*, as that it is next to impoſſible to form them to the ſcale of muſic, or learn them to ſing any part of the tune, let them take ever ſo much pains; but this is not commonly the caſe.—When this is the caſe with any one, it is his unhappineſs, and he ought to be pitied; ſuch perſons muſt join their ears and hearts, in this part of worſhip, but not their voices. But the beſt maſters of muſic tell us, that there are but very few voices but what may be tolerably well formed to the ſcale of muſic, on one part or the other; and a ſkilful maſter will quick perceive which part the voice is formed for, and will direct them accordingly. So it appears that but very few indeed, can excuſe themſelves, in the neglect of the duty we are conſidering, either in public or family worſhip. The ſame reaſons that inforce the importance of ſinging with the voice of melody, in the public worſhip of God, hold good with regard to the worſhip of the family:—Has it a tendency to excite devotion and to promote the religion of the heart, in the public worſhip of God, it has the ſame tendency in the worſhip of the family; and God is glorified in the latter, as well as by the former. Now

Now what excuſe can we make in the neglect of this part of worſhip in the family? The common excuſe made, we have heard is, in its own nature, criminal:—We cannot, we do not know how, we never learned to ſing, &c. This (unleſs the incapacity be natural, as we have before obſerved) is your blame, your inability, your incapacity is of a moral kind, in which lieth your blame.—Why have you not learned to ſing? And why have you not taught your families to ſing forth the praiſes of their God and Redeemer? Have you not voices for other occaſions? And have not your children voices to uſe in ſinging wanton ſongs? And have not both parents and children, as well as others of the houſhold, capacities to learn other things much more difficult to learn than pſalmody? Is not the true reaſon why you cannot manage a pſalm or hymn in the family with decency and regular harmony, to the glory of God, and your own comfort, becauſe you will not afford yourſelves or children time, and a little expence, that ye may be able to ſing together, and offer to God this part of his worſhip. If this is the caſe guilt lieth at the door, you will have to anſwer for talents miſimproved, or hid in a napkin, if you continue in the neglect. When we conſider with what eaſe a tolerable acquaintance with the ſcale of muſic may

may be obtained in this day, ſufficient to join in this part of God's worſhip, both in public and in the family, with decency and harmony: One would think that ſhame muſt cover the face, and bluſhing the cheek of many, that neglect and diſregard this duty, upon the plea of incapacity. I have dwelt the longer upon this inference, becauſe it is of great importance; if the people of God would accuſtom themſelves to ſinging in their family worſhip, they would ſoon find the uſe of their voices, they would ſoon be animated to learn the rule of ſinging, they would ſoon find the comfort and enjoyment of it, and we ſhould ſoon ſee an amazing alteration for the better, in our muſic in the houſe of the Lord.

III. But further we infer, that it is both the duty and intereſt of every one, and that the obligation is binding upon all that are capable of it, now forthwith to apply themſelves to this noble art, and that with a view to the glory of God, in the graceful and decent performance of this important part of his ſacred worſhip, that pſalmody may be revived among us; indeed this will have a powerful tendency to revive dying and decaying religion among us, for we have heard that ſacred muſic has a peculiar influence on the mind of man, to ſoften the rougher paſſions, to calm the whole ſoul, and to prepare

pare it for the moſt ſerious meditations ; and in this way to prepare it for the grace of God in the operation of his holy ſpirit, in its converting as well as quickning influence. It has been an old obſervation of the people of God, that vital religion, the power of godlineſs and pſalmody, have decayed and revived together ; and cannot ſome of us witneſs to ſomething of this ſort within our own obſervation : And is not this an argument of weight, to excite us all to the moſt vigorous attempts to revive declining pſalmody among us. And to this end it is greatly incumbent upon parents and heads of families, to take all proper care and pains to be qualified for the performance of the duty themſelves, and to ſee to it, that their children and houſholds are put under good advantages to this purpoſe : Have you not ſolemnly covenanted with God, have you not ſworn before many witneſſes, is not the oath of God upon you, that you will train up your houſholds in the *admonition* as well as nurture of the Lord ? And God has appointed ſinging his praiſes in a ſocial way, as *one* method of admoniſhing, Coloſ. iii. 16th. St. Paul ſays, *admoniſhing one another in pſalms, hymns and ſpiritual ſongs* :---You therefore have not diſcharged this duty as you ought, until you have made effectual tryal of your capacity for ſacred *muſic* your-

ſelves,

ſelves, and given your children and others under your care, opportunity and advantage for it, where, and when, it may be had within your power, But

IV. Let high and low, rich and poor, chriſtians of every denomination, ſtation and relation of life, be perſuaded to put to their ſhoulders in ſo good a work, as the revival of ſacred *muſic* : As it cannot be done without labour and pains, and not commonly without ſome little coſt, let thoſe that have voices, and can learn, eſpecially the younger part, take pains in this excellent art, and let others, *eſpecially* thoſe that are opulent, contribute to this good deſign as God has given them increaſe, and as the cauſe may require ; whether they mean to learn or not, that others may have all poſſible advantage, who may be diſpoſed to apply themſelves to the buſineſs of learning the art of muſic, to be employed in the worſhip of God ; it is of public *utility*, and a public ſpirit will excite to this. This is a flouriſhing, opulent town, and it would be no great burden to ſupport a free and open ſchool, for the learning of ſacred muſic, a great part of the year ; and were this come into, the whole town would ſoon feel, and would quickly be convinced of the general benefit ; it is much to your advantage at home, and to your honor abroad, that you have not only made ample provi-

ſion

ſion for the ſupport of the public worſhip of God in other parts of it, but have taken LIBERAL care for the ſchooling, and training up children and youth at the public expence *.

And will you be wanting in this part of inſtruction that demands ſo little expence, and is of ſuch public and divine advantage? I charitably hope you will not: If you would have the ſpirit of pſalmody make rapid progreſs among you, let the rich and honorable, perſons of diſtinction, of both ſexes, engage in it, as well as others, and let none be too big to learn ſo excellent an art, and ſo ſhall your example redound to the glory of God, and general benefit in this regard. It is no diſhonor to the moſt dignified perſon among us, to be engaged in ſacred *muſic*; it is a genteel accompliſhment for the honorable of both ſexes, and has always been eſteemed ſo by the wiſeſt and beſt of men in all civilized nations: It will recommend you as men; but how much more ſo as chriſtians; it enlarges the mind, it ennobles the ſoul, it filleth it with refined ſentiments, and turns out from the mind low grovling ideas. But above all, it is to the glory of God, and ſerves your beſt, your religious intereſt, and will you not be perſuaded by this? Are you more honorable than King David, are you more

* There are three public ſchools in Newbury-Port, ſupported with handſome ſalaries, beſides a very conſiderable number of private ſchools.

more reſpectable than Chenaniah the chief of the Levites : And they thought it no diſhonor to make this ſacred muſic much of their employ ; and in this heavenly art they could inſtruct others, and think it no ſtoop, no tarniſh to their honor.----Beſides, ye rich, ye honorable in this world, will ye not be willing, by and by, to join iſſue, and ſing in conſort with thoſe that are now beneath you, when they, leaving the church militant, ſhall join the church triumphant, and eternally ſing forth the praiſes of God in heaven. When perſons of diſtinction, wealth and honor, come to be engaged in ſo good a work, then there will be an open ſchool or ſchools for pſalmody, upon a generous plan, free for all denominations without diſtinction ; and I cannot but flatter myſelf, that this will ſoon be the caſe : And are there any *Chenaniahs* among you, that are able to inſtruct about the ſong, becauſe they are ſkilful, and are they willing to ſpend their ſtrength, time and talents in the work, let a ſufficient number be employed in this buſineſs, and let them have a reaſonable, and but a reaſonable reward. Then, and perhaps not till then, ſhall we ſee ſacred muſic generally revived, and God be worſhipped in our religious aſſemblies with the ſweeteſt harmony in ſongs of praiſe ; and our hearts thereby be warmed with the moſt fervent devotion.

A thought or two more and I have done: How melancholy is it, that we ſcarce hear a *female* voice in our public worſhip of praiſe, though they make up ſo great a part of our worſhipping aſſemblies.—Suffer me, therefore, an addreſs, ye females of this large and reſpectable aſſembly, eſpecially to the younger part of you:—For *what* did the great Author of *Nature* throw peculiar *ſweetneſs* into your VOICES, as well as delicacy in your general conſtitution?—Why did he form it upon a different and ſublimer key? Why has he given it the force of *charm?* Was it to trill a looſe air, or chant a wanton ſong; to excite deſire, and to give fuel to the looſer paſſions?—Surely no.—Was it not rather that you might uſe the ſweetneſs of your voice in ſinging the praiſes of your God, and to the honour of your Redeemer; and that by a diſtinct part of the muſic, in the public worſhip; you might add *dignity*, *ſoftneſs* and the *ſweeteſt harmony* to the ſolemn ſong. It is worth your conſideration, that though the inſpired apoſtle ſeems to have ſhut your mouths in every other part of public worſhip, yet he hath left them open in this; and will you ſhut them in the only part of public worſhip, in which you can open them with decency, and to your own, and others comfort and edification? Will you not improve the *liberty* God hath given you,

and

and in a peculiar manner fitted you for, *harmony* of ſound, and to grace the worſhip of his praiſe ; your imaginations are quick and lively, and by induſtry and application, you may ſoon learn, in a good meaſure, this excellent art ; and ſo your *charming* voices ſhall add beauty to, and give inſtruction in the worſhip of God. Had I time I might perſuade you to the duty, by many affecting arguments, by the conſideration of the redeeming mercy and dying love, by the bowels of a Saviour, who wept, agonized and died, that you might rejoice and ſing ; I might perſuade you by the frequent appearances of a gracious God, in diſpenſing ſpecial ſaving mercy in anſwer to praiſe, as well as prayer.—But I forbear.—Let me cloſe with a general addreſs, and perſuade all that can, to engage in, or promote ſacred muſic, by the *excellency and tendency of it*, as it raiſes the ſoul to God, and excites holy deſires after him, and the tokens of his favour, and calms the ſoul, quiets the rougher paſſions, and prepares the mind for ſerious meditations, and for the *reſidence* of God by his holy ſpirit ; it muſt be excellent ; and thus it is an excellent antidote againſt Satan's injections and temptations, whether ſubtle wiles, or fiery darts. Sacred muſic is a barrier to keep Satan out of the ſoul, it ſhuts, as it were, againſt him each avenue to the heart ;

heart ; muſic is in direct oppoſition to this ſubtle adverſary, he cannot live where it is, in any perfection, he muſt flee before the pious and harmonious muſic of the people of God ; David's muſic could diſlodge him from Saul himſelf, where he had long poſſeſſion : So my friends, if you will unite in a gracious harmony of heart and voice, you ſhall keep the devil out, or drive him from your hearts, you ſhall drive him out of town, what I mean is, that ye ſhall triumph over his temptations, through the promiſed aid of him that hath loved you, and died for you ; by this, every litigating party may be ſoothed into love, peace, and harmony.---- Wrath, malice, evil ſpeaking and backbiting, thoſe tools and engines of the devil, and promoters of his kingdom, ſhall flee before your united ſacred muſic ; while you meet together for this heart-chearing, and love and peace begetting and promoting employ : Theſe angry, turbulent paſſions ſhall find no place, for they ſhall be ſoothed and huſhed to ſilence, by the practice of this ſacred art. The malicious heart, the angry paſſions upon a ſlandering backbiting tongue, *ſet on fire the courſe of nature* ; *and are ſet on fire of hell.* But the ſofter and manly paſſions, love, peace, joy, gratitude and friendſhip, are ſet on fire [illegible] *muſic*, and thereby neighbourhoods and communities are cemented in

in the bonds of love and affection. Then ſurely this heavenly art is worth taking ſome pains about ; it is a laudable ambition, to ſhine in the knowledge and practice of it, and by theſe arguments would I perſuade you to the ſublime employ. But I ſhall ſhut up the whole by turning your attention to ſomewhere between fifty and an hundred motives, to learn and practice this excellent art * ; there they are before you ; and it affords me no little pleaſure, to obſerve that theſe motives are, a number of them, of the feminine, as well as of the maſculine gender : ---How are we charmed when they ſing in conſort, how does the ſkilful, and divine muſic *thrill* through every pore and vein ; and how are our ſouls wrapt in ſacred devotion. O what would the muſic be, how ſtriking and inſtructive the harmony ; could a whole aſſembly ſing with like exactneſs. Go on my muſical friends and proſper, and may the Lord be with you, and bleſs you ; ſee to it that you get the melody of the heart, the grace of God, and true ſpiritual devotion there ; that from ſweetly ſinging together here, ye may join the church triumphant, and the eternal anthem to God and the lamb in the heavenly ſtate.---And oh ! That the ſacred fire may catch from man to man, and from

* About the number of the ſociety of ſingers, that were preſent on the occaſion.

from houſe to houſe, until it burn to a glorious flame. May the laudable ambition, to learn this ſublime art, ſpread through the whole town, and into the neighbouring towns and pariſhes; and may there be many *Chenaniahs* raiſed up, who ſhall inſtruct about the ſong, becauſe they are ſkilful. Which may God of his infinite mercy grant, through Jeſus Chriſt, Amen.

FINIS.